



SPECIAL NOTICE

1999 SABLEFISH LONGLINE SURVEY AND LONGLINE FISHERY SAMPLING

February, 1999

Fishery sampling changes in 1999: Based on fishermen's requests to add fishery data to the sablefish assessment, NMFS plans some changes in longline fishery sampling in 1999.

New Longline Logbooks

NMFS, IPHC, and fishing associations have worked together to revise catcher vessel logbooks required for vessels over 60 ft. The plan is for Halibut Commission port samplers to request from fishermen one copy of completed logbook pages at the time of landing to forward to NMFS for analysis. The logbook data will be added to a fishery catch rate analysis currently underway by NMFS. This analysis includes voluntary logbooks from vessels under 60 ft.

Electronic temperature-depth tags

Look for a 3/4 inch diameter x 2 1/4 inch long electronic tag found in the abdominal cavity of sablefish. A 3 inch long fluorescent green and fluorescent pink tag located near the first dorsal fin of the fish marks the specially tagged fish. The external tag reads - "Reward for Depth Sensor Inside Fish".

These electronic tags record depth and temperature. Data from those tags will provide information about sablefish behavior and the marine environmental conditions they experience. NMFS began using these electronic tags in 1998.

You can help fishery research as well as receive a \$500 reward. If you recover a electronic tag, please contact Mike Sigler, 907-789-6037, or Tom Rutecki, 907-789-6051.

Otoliths and sexed length frequencies

Observers are trained to make appropriate cuts to identify sex and extract otoliths without damaging the product. The sex information is important because male and female sablefish grow at different rates, which in turn is important for identifying strong year classes. Some fishermen are reluctant to allow observers to cut the fish because they fear the observer will damage the fish and lower its commercial value. NMFS requests that fishermen allow observers to cut the fish so that more male and female length data are available for the sablefish assessment.

Sablefish otoliths have been collected during sablefish longline surveys, but not from the fishery. Observers will begin collecting sablefish otoliths from the longline fishery in 1999. Age data from the fishery then can be added to the sablefish assessment.

Sablefish longline survey

This notice also is a reminder that the annual sablefish longline survey, conducted by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), will proceed during the summer months (June, July, and August) of 1999. **Longline fishermen are strongly urged to stay at least five nautical miles away from each survey station for 7 days before, and 3 days after, the planned sampling.**

The table below provides an overview of the survey stations and planned sampling dates. A more detailed table listing daily activities and locations is available on the Internet at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/ifq/ifq.htm> or by contacting Tom Rutecki, AFSC (Tel: 907-789-6051; e-mail Tom.Rutecki@noaa.gov). The survey vessel will broadcast its current location daily at 1730 (5:30 p.m.) Alaska Local Time on single side band radio frequency 4125.

1999 Sablefish Survey --- Overview of Dates and Activities

| Dates | Areas | Activities |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5/28/99 - 6/1/99 | Dutch Harbor | Preparations, Transiting |
| 6/2 - 6/14 | Bering Sea | Sampling |
| 6/15 | Dutch Harbor | Transit to Port |
| 6/16 - 6/18 | Bering Sea | Sampling |
| 6/19 - 6/28 | Western Gulf | Sampling |
| 6/29-7/7 | GOA seamounts | Sampling, transit |
| 7/8 | Ketchikan | In Port |
| 7/9 - 7/23 | East Yakutat / Southeast | Sampling |
| 7/24 - 7/27 | Yakutat | In Port |
| 7/28 - 8/8 | West Yakutat | Sampling |
| 8/9 - 8/10 | Seward | In Port |
| 8/11 - 8/20 | Central Gulf | Sampling |
| 8/21 | Kodiak | In Port |
| 8/22 - 9/3 | Central Gulf | Sampling |
| 9/4 - 9/5 | Dutch Harbor | Transit, Unload |